



Funded by Carl D. Perkins
Gender Nontraditional Grant
through the Nebraska Department
of Education

Southeast Community College Milford

Marching to Equality:

Finding gender equality through gender nontraditional education

What is Gender Nontraditional?

A gender nontraditional field is defined as an occupation or field of work, including careers in computer science, technology, and other emerging high skill occupations, for which individuals from one gender comprise less than 25 percent of individuals employed in each such occupation or field of work.

Gender nontraditional programs for women:

- Architectural-Engineering Technology
- Auto Collision Repair
- Automotive Technology
- Building Construction
- Computer Programming
- Deere Construction & Forestry
- Diesel Technology
- Electrical & Electromechanical
- Electronic Servicing and Electronic Engineering Technology

- Ford Training
- Heating, Ventilation, Air Conditioning
- John Deere Ag
- Land Surveying Technology
- Machine Tool Technology
- Manufacturing & CAD
- Nondestructive Testing
- Parts Marketing & Management
- Welding Technology

Gender nontraditional programs for men: Graphic Design

Why do we need Gender Nontraditional Education?



- Nebraska women's median annual income is 73.8% of men's median annual income. (Nebraska Census, 2000)

Three out of four working women earn less than \$25,000 a year. (Nebraska Commission on the Status of Women, Status Report, January 2003)

In Nebraska, 80% of the workers in the 20 lowest paying job classifications are women. (Nebraska Commission on the Status of Women, Status Report, January 2003)

Seward County households headed by single women are nearly three times more likely than other Nebraska households to fall below the poverty income level (27.8% compared to 9.7%). (Nebraska Census, 2000)

Poverty data also shows that women 65 or older are about half as likely as men to have a pension other than social security. (Nebraska Commission on the Status of Women, Status Report, January 2003)

Barriers to Gender Nontraditional Education

Cultural bias - Individual cultural backgrounds and society's expectations tend to promote traditional rather than nontraditional gender behavior, abilities, interests, and values in relation to work. Overcoming pervasive cultural bias requires equally strong academic, social, and personal commitment.

Academic/career bias – Unfortunately, school systems inadvertently perpetuate cultural bias. Women in particular are not encouraged to pursue typically “male” careers, such as science, research, and especially technology. To overcome this historical bias, students need well-trained faculty and advisors to provide awareness, encouragement, information, ongoing advising, and support. Retention is positively affected when students establish relationships and bonds within an institution. Students enrolled in gender nontraditional college programs sometimes need the structure provided by an identifiable support program.

Lack of career exploration and knowledge – Many students have not been presented with the opportunity to consider gender nontraditional career options, participate in assessment testing or study educational programs. Because of shrinking budgets, fewer high schools are offering vocational courses; therefore, students are not regularly exposed to a full range of career options. Special efforts are needed to overcome this hindrance and introduce gender nontraditional occupations and training to both high school and re-careering or age-nontraditional students.

Financial barriers – Financial concerns will often affect persistence, grade point average, and completion outcomes. Women are especially vulnerable because of their historically inferior earning power. Recent data show that 46.5% of SCC students have significant financial needs and receive need-based financial aid. Even more, 59.6% of gender nontraditional students receive some form of financial assistance. In addition to financial resources, many students need financial aid counseling that helps them reach their educational goals without acquiring more debt and creating more obstacles for success.

GNT Activities at SCC Milford

WIT Conference – A planned event to demonstrate to high school students the vast array of options open to them, particularly in gender nontraditional fields.

Hometown Outreach Project – A more intimate experience for a select group of junior high school females to experience a day in the life of an SCC college student.

Sisters Organization – This support organization is an essential part of student life for the many gender nontraditional students.

Educational Assistance Grants and Financial Aid Counseling – One of the many ways SCC helps to ease the common strains associated with college.

Women's Leadership Conference – SCC provides funding to give women the opportunity to gain insight into being successful in college and in pursuing careers in male-dominated fields after graduation.



Women In Tech Conference

On October 19, 2005, SCC-Milford held the Women in Technology (WIT) Career Conference. This conference, an annual occurrence since 1990, gives SCC a chance to highlight its many gender nontraditional careers to potential students and show women how rewarding and exciting a career in a technological field can be.

Visiting students, parents, teachers, and counselors have the opportunity to explore the numerous programs that are available for study, learning about classes and campus life by touring each program and speaking with men and women who are currently studying at SCC.



Who participated?

- Students: 54 Seniors, 27 Juniors, 7 Sophomores, 3 Freshmen, 3 Nontraditional/Unlisted
- Parents/Counselors: 23

Outcomes so far:

- 65 expressed intent to enroll
- 3 applied that day for enrollment
- 20 submitted "Interest" cards

34 High schools participated: Columbus, Crete, East Buchanan (MO), Elmwood-Murdock, Hanover (KS), Lincoln High, Lincoln Northeast, Lincoln North Star, Lincoln Southwest, Lincoln Lutheran, Louisville, Milford, Millard West, Minatare, Minden, Omaha Benson, Omaha Bryan, Omaha Burke, Omaha Central, Omaha North, Omaha Northwest, Omaha South, Pawnee, Platte Center, Saint Edward Public, Benton (MO), Central (MO), Lafayette (MO), Savannah (MO), Seward, Wilber-Clatonia, Wahoo, York

Hometown Outreach Project

Female students on the SCC-Milford campus proposed inviting junior high school girl scouts from their respective hometowns and surrounding areas to come to Milford campus for an overnight **Campus Visit, Campus Tour, and Day of Exploring the Gender Nontraditional Programs**. As a result, 11 visitors attended sessions demonstrating gender nontraditional programs SCC offers. Visiting students were given the opportunity to tour program areas and have hands-on experience with implementing skills used in those programs. The guests were able to spend time in the college's recreation areas and tour the dorms, experiencing a glimpse of college life. Before leaving in the morning, the visiting students were able to question current gender nontraditional SCC students about what their experiences with college were really like. Early exposure to gender nontraditional programs helps young women envision a different future for themselves. An evaluation of the experience showed that an overwhelming majority of the respondents indicated that they had not only enjoyed the event, but learned a great deal about possible future college and career opportunities. Many also said they would persuade others to attend similar events in the future and said that the HOP had encouraged them to attend college.



Sisters Organization

The Sisters Organization, initiated through the Nontraditional grant, has become an established student organization on Milford Campus. This unique organization, through planned meetings and activities, provides a support group for women on a campus that is over 90% male. The Sisters Organization provides a safe place to voice questions and concerns, and also find friendly faces of other women in gender nontraditional programs.

In 2005-06, up to 23 women attended one or more monthly sessions. Some of the activities included:

- study groups
- exercise and self-defense activities
- group outings
- planning Hometown Outreach Project
- Women's Leadership Conference

Educational Assistance Grants and Financial Aid Counseling



The grant provided funds for 11 scholarships for female students enrolled in gender nontraditional programs.

- 91% of grant recipients have either graduated or are continuing their education
- 8 graduated, 2 are continuing
- Only one student dropped or stopped out of her program.



Women's Leadership Conference

To help women gain confidence and poise in a challenging gender nontraditional field, the Nontraditional program initiated a new conference for SCC women this year, inviting all campuses.



On May 12, 25 SCC women and interested faculty and staff attended the day-long conference.



Women who were leaders in their fields provided tips on how to compete in a masculine world, etiquette to use with employers, negotiating tactics for equitable pay, and many other useful life-skills that all women, especially those in gender nontraditional careers, need to be successful. In an evaluation, 100% of participants described the conference as “excellent” and said they would recommend it to others.

College-wide results of NT Programs

Statistics gathered for Perkins programs indicated a successful year in gender nontraditional programs.

- 414 gender nontraditional students enrolled in SCC programs in 2005-06
- 196 males and 218 females enrolled
- 123 gender nontraditional students graduated from their programs, 54 males and 69 females.
- Graduates overcame many barriers: 74 (60%) qualified for PELL grants; 95 (77%) had taken developmental classes at some time during their matriculation; 8 (6.5%) were single parents; 2 (1.6%) had disabilities, and 6 (4.8%) were minority races.

The image shows the exterior of the Southeast Community College Milford Campus. The building is a two-story structure with a reddish-brown facade and a flat roof. A black lamppost stands in front of the building. The sky is blue with white clouds. In the foreground, there is a paved area and some landscaping with green and red shrubs. A large white text overlay reads "Thank You!".

Thank You!

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